



## Recognition of individuals that exemplify classic Aruban culture at the Instituto di Cultura

On Wednesday evening, October 17, a festive gathering of folkloric music and dance paid tribute to the continuation of these traditional arts on Aruba, and three individuals that have devoted a large part of their lives to propagating them amongst the population. This jubilant event took place in the courtyard of the Instituto di Cultura in Oranjestad.

The night was dedicated to Imelda Eckmeyer-Bermudez, Eddy Tromp and Higinio (Patan) Faro, who have made invaluable contributions to instigate and maintain Aruban cultural traditions. The evening was organized by Judith Martha, director of the “Nos Cultura” dance troupe, who was also honored by a special appearance by Aivie Rosalia-Stacie of Curacao, for her efforts in demonstrating and maintaining interest in native dances of the region.

Lisette Zimmerman of the Curacao Cas di Cultura, which is the equivalent of Aruba’s Instituto di Cultura, opened the evening with comments on the importance of educating the island youth in the traditions of the region, particularly in the arts, and seeing that it is kept alive through succeeding generations. Judith Martha recounted her years of friendship with Imelda Eckmeyer-Bermudez, when they were childhood friends, and declared Imelda “The Mother of the Noord Carnival.” It was through contributions and devotion to Carnaval and her striving to make the Noord Parade a popular event that Imelda earned her tribute that evening. Judith presented her with gifts, and her nephew, Alfons Linders, with his wife Charlene, representing the next generation, presented Imelda with a bouquet in gratitude for all she has done.

Eddy Tromp has a show on station Radio Kelkboom that is devoted to the music of the region, helping to popularize it amongst the youth, and Patan Faro is a master of the Caha d’Orgal, an instrument of the region the is similar to an organ grinder. In Aruba, the construction of a Caha d’Orgal is an art, and Patan is one of only two men on Aruba that make the musical drums that drive the instrument, a very complex and difficult task. Nelson Sprok performed on the instrument, and the popular dances that are usually the repertoire of the Caha d’Orgal were demonstrated.

Well known folkloric music group “Los Amigos” also played a number of selections, using traditional instruments such as the “wiri” and “cuarto,” a small guitar. The evening ended with a Carnaval show by the popular “Coco Rico Dancers” accompanied by the Super Dancers.

A special surprise for the evening was a presentation to “Padu” Lampe, musician, composer, and co-author of Aruba’s national anthem, often referred to as the “Father of Aruban Culture.” A young honeymoon couple from Holland, Laura Fisher and Carlos van der Aa, wished to express their gratitude for his many contributions to the musical arts, and they so loved his famous song “A Bo So” (“Only You”) they chose it as their wedding song.

This evening devoted to recognition of the musical and dance culture of the region, and those that work to keep it alive provided a delightful event for all those that attended, and demonstrated that classic culture, though some may deem it “old-fashioned,” is never really out of fashion, and worth preserving.